



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Office of the Secretary

State of Delaware
Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

October 21, 2002

Policy Memorandum Number 26

Subject: DHSS Web Policy

I. Background

The role of the DHSS website is to provide timely, accurate and useful information to the public that will facilitate and uphold the DHSS Mission: *“To improve the quality of life for Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.”*

II. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to explain the role of the DHSS website, define the responsibilities regarding the DHSS website, provide standards for accomplishing the role and responsibilities, define appropriate web development resources and explain the procedures for publishing web information.

III. Foundation of Policy

A) E-Government Steering Committee Web Standards: On January 22, 2001, Governor Ruth Ann Minner issued Executive Order 9 establishing an Electronic Government Steering Committee. One of the duties charged to this committee is to develop a

“... comprehensive, uniform set of standards for State agencies dealing with the issues of technology architecture, privacy, accessibility, and content with respect to Internet-based technologies. Agencies shall adhere to the standards developed by the Committee....” (Executive Order 9, § 4(a))

The State of Delaware Web Presentation Guidelines can be found at:
<http://www.state.de.us/sos/gic/standards.htm>. DHSS has adopted all of the State's

- standards,
- guidelines and
- issues for further discussion

as standards since they may become so at any time. Please see Appendix A: DHSS Web Standards and Procedures, Section I: State Standards for how DHSS has addressed certain state mandated items for uniformity across the DHSS website.

- B) Federal Standards:** As of June 21, 2001, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has made it mandatory for the federal government or a site provided under contract to a Federal agency, to present electronic information, including information on Web sites and intranets, so that it can be accessed by everyone. This law is defined and implemented by Part 1194 of the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards specifically Subpart B § 1194.22 Web-based intranet and internet information and applications (which can be found at:

<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=12#Web>)

According to a summary of the standard, found at:

<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=11#web>, "The standards apply to Federal web sites but not to private sector web sites (unless a site is provided under contract to a Federal agency, in which case only that web site or portion covered by the contract would have to comply.)" Since DHSS often receives federal funds for projects that may be funded and featured on its web site, we must comply with these standards for such projects. Since these are good accessibility practices, DHSS has also adopted these practices and requires all DHSS web pages to comply with these standards.

- C) Department of Technology and Information/Office of Information Services**

(DTI/OIS) Policy: DTI/OIS has developed policies regarding acceptable uses of the State Information Transport Network. These are defined in the "State of Delaware - STATE INFORMATION TRANSPORT NETWORK (SITN) Acceptable Use Policy." One of the most specific items to note is that it is unacceptable to solicit commercial advertising (Section IV. Unacceptable Uses, Item #3). This policy is located on the State Intranet at: <http://intranet.state.de.us/ois/operate/comprscs/sitnlaw.htm>.

- D) DHSS Web Development Standards:** It is the Department's responsibility to uphold and enforce the standards promulgated in the policies and standards outlined above. In order to accomplish this goal, additional standards and procedures will also be enforced. Please see Appendix A: DHSS Web Standards and Procedures, Sections II & III for DHSS-defined Standards and Procedures. The DHSS Communications Director must specifically approve any deviation from DHSS standards and procedures.

IV. Responsibility

1. The Department and all internal Divisions, offices or other such agencies will adhere to and promote the policies and standards outlined in Section III above.
2. Division Directors will provide the DHSS Communications Director with a list of one web relations designee, responsible for the web information of his/her Division, and one web developer, responsible for the development of web pages. Please note that these two appointees must be two different individuals and only the web relations designees may

submit information for posting to the Intra- and/or Internets to the Communications Director. If the web relations designee is unavailable, the Division Director must appoint a backup during his/her absence.

3. Divisions will be responsible for ensuring the functionality and accuracy of their web pages.
4. Divisions are responsible for keeping their information current and accurate and for ensuring an overall professional appearance.
5. The web relations designees, the Department Communications Director and representatives from Division of Management Services/Information Resources Management (DMS/IRM) will comprise the DHSS Web Development Team. This team will meet periodically for the purpose of discussing the Department's web presence, recommending future development, standards and policy and determining the appropriate DHSS web template for use throughout the DHSS website. This team will also have the opportunity to take proposed standards and policy back to their Divisions for review with Division Directors, web developers, etc. Committee recommendations will be implemented upon approval of the DHSS Communications Director. The designees may not send network or application staff as Division representatives to DHSS Web Development Team meetings.
6. The Office of the Secretary will maintain the information on the calendar of events, press release, DHSS Accomplishments, DHSS Newsletters, Departmental policy memoranda, Office of the Secretary and the Delaware Health Fund Advisory Committee pages.
7. DMS will maintain Human Resource information and DHSS job postings.
8. Technical questions not covered by this policy, nor by the related standards and procedures, will be referred to the Director of DMS/IRM.

V. Effect:

1. This policy becomes effective immediately.
2. This Department Policy memorandum supercedes all other policies, directives, standards, guidelines, procedures or rules related to this subject.

Vincent P. Meconi
Secretary

Appendix A: DHSS Web Standards and Procedures

I State Standards

a) Accessibility:

- i) In accordance with the State of Delaware Web Presentation Guidelines (Version 2.0), DHSS adopts HTML 4.01 Transitional as the appropriate HTML specification (although efforts toward HTML 4.01 Strict are encouraged.) As technologies and languages develop, this specification will change in the future.
- ii) In accordance with the State of Delaware Web Presentation Guidelines (Version 2.0), DHSS minimally adopts the meta tags "description" and "keywords" as standard. Other meta information may also be adopted.

b) Use of PDF Documents

- i) In accordance with the State of Delaware Web Presentation Guidelines (Version 2.0), DHSS adopts provision of standards compliant HTML files wherever possible. However when a PDF must be used, both a text-only version and a link to the Adobe conversion tool at: <http://access.adobe.com> must also be provided. This usage should be extended to the Intranet also for consistency regardless of the fact that DHSS is currently using Microsoft Office products as standard tools.

II DHSS Standards

a) Content Standards: The development of clear and pertinent content is of paramount importance to the DHSS website. To this end, DHSS has developed the following content standards.

- i) Intranet vs. Internet: The difference between the Intranet and Internet is not always clear. The **Intranet** displays information that only Delaware State employees can access. The **Internet** (or the WWW or web) displays information that is accessible to the whole world. Since all Delaware State employees should have access to the domains www.state.de.us and www.delaware.gov, duplication of Internet material on the Intranet must not occur. Therefore, the DHSS Intranet and Internet sites must be tailored to their specific purposes and audiences. This can be best exemplified by the Intranet material as information for State employees only (e.g. forms, policy, internal services) and the Internet material as information for any constituent, employee and resident alike.
- ii) Information providers should avoid the use of obscure jargon when developing web pages intended for a general audience.
- iii) Each Division or sub-unit must have its mission statement on its website.
- iv) Each Division or sub-unit must have links back to the main Department page.
- v) All pages must be checked carefully for spelling and grammar errors.

- vi) All web pages must contain the same DHSS constituent e-mail address (dhssinfo@state.de.us) for questions about the website. Exceptions may be granted by the Communications Director, if strongly justified.
 - vii) All DHSS pages must use the DHSS template as recommended by the Web Development Committee. The DHSS Communications Director must specifically approve any deviation from this template.
- b) **Technical Standards:** In order to provide a high-quality website that is accessible to the majority of our viewers, DHSS has developed the following technical guidelines and standards to be used by all information providers.
- i) Naming Conventions:
 - 1. Good naming practices must be used when creating web pages. This means that the name of the file must be descriptive of its contents (instead of using something like “page1.html” for a job postings page, call it “dhssjobs.html”). Files created prior to April 2002 may be granted exceptions, if specifically approved by the Communications Director.
 - 2. All DHSS HTML files must use the .html file extension. All DHSS web file names should consist of only letters, numbers, dashes or underscores and must not contain spaces or other characters not defined above. This will foster consistency across the Department and throughout the Divisions. Previously, the .htm suffix was specified for HTML files, however it is advisable for DHSS to begin following the more standardized process of using .html. Files created prior to April 2002 may be granted exceptions, if specifically approved by the Communications Director.
 - 3. When using letters to name and reference files, use **lowercase** letters. The web servers are case sensitive and will not find the files if they are either saved or referenced with capitalization and not called or saved accordingly.
 - ii) File Sizes: Excessive file sizes create extra load on the web servers and viewers with slower connections may have difficulty accessing large files. Therefore, DHSS HTML web pages must not exceed 150KB in size. This space restriction would include all graphics or other objects embedded in the HTML page. Under special circumstances, files larger than 150K may be allowed and require special permission from the Communications Director.
 - iii) Graphics: Graphics should be used effectively but sparingly to create the right message from a website. When using graphics, only browser-supported graphics must be used (.gif, .jpg or .png), and the most effective type must be chosen to balance the needs for space, presentation and quality.
 - iv) Accessibility through Navigation: If you use graphics or applets as navigation tools for your site, you must provide an alternative text-based navigation option.

- v) **HTML Validation:** To uphold the State standard of maintaining HTML compliance, all pages must be HTML validated to check syntax. The most effective way to accomplish this is to use HTML validation software like CSE HTML Validator. This can be purchased through the normal requisition process and the most recent version of this software can be found at: <http://www.htmlvalidator.com/>. A freeware version is also available. DMS/IRM can assist in the proper configuration of the validator.
 - vi) **Hyperlink Checking:** All links from DHSS-maintained web pages must be regularly checked in order to ensure that they are not “broken.”
 - vii) **Accessibility:** The State of Delaware Web Presentation Guidelines (Version 2.0) minimally request that pages successfully pass Priority 1 checkpoints in the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. In addition, the state guidelines also recommend passing checkpoints categorized as Priority 2 and 3 where possible. Since DHSS has chosen to adopt all state guidelines as standards, all three priorities must be passed unless specific workarounds can be achieved. These workarounds must be approved by the DHSS Communications Director. To uphold State and Federal standards regarding accessibility, DHSS recommends the use of the Bobby accessibility tool and would like to obtain the “Bobby Approval” award. The Bobby Approval is an award and initiative to design accessible websites for people with disabilities. For more information and to obtain the Bobby software, please visit the Bobby website at: <http://bobby.watchfire.com/>.
 - viii) As more sophisticated capabilities than defined specifically in this document (i.e. html and css) become available, web developers must be in contact with the Web Development Committee regarding what technologies they would like to use. Therefore, the use of any technology other than HTML and Cascading Style Sheets must be submitted to the Web Development Committee for review/approval before any development occurs. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that the privacy policy is current and accurate, that technologies can be supported and that the best technologies are being used for the best purposes. Failure to submit more sophisticated technologies for review prior to development will result in those pages not being posted to the server.
- c) **Location of Intranet and Internet Servers Standards:**
- i) **Production servers:** All production web pages/information **must** reside on one DHSS internet or intranet production server, unless granted special permission by the DHSS Communications Director, after Division approval is obtained. All Intranet and Internet production servers must be housed in the Biggs Data Center. No other servers may be maintained for the purpose of distributing information to any or all of DHSS and the world. This policy can be waived in certain circumstances by the DHSS Communications Director.

- ii) Development servers: Divisions may use development servers for the purpose of development only. These servers may be accessed by only the following individuals:
 - 1. The Division's web developer(s)
 - 2. The web developer's supervisor(s)
 - 3. The Division's and DMS/IRM's technical staff
 - 4. The Division's web relations designee
 - 5. The DHSS Communications Director
 - 6. The Director of the Division in question
 - 7. Any divisional staff directly participating in the authoring of the pages (such as program staff that are providing content guidance)

Promoting access to development servers to anyone but the above-mentioned individuals is in direct violation of the DHSS Web Development Standards and is not acceptable.

- d) **Scope of Standards:** The standards listed above will apply to all DHSS Intra- and Internet development. This includes on-line applications, which are to be developed only by programmers/developers under the management of DMS/IRM. Applications are defined to be interactive web pages that make use of the FORM related elements of HTML, programmatic logic and/or database access that have an effect outside of formatting and display.
- e) **DHSS Standards Enforcement:** DMS/IRM will perform hyperlink, HTML validation and Bobby Checking on the entire DHSS website once every two months and will report the findings to the DHSS Communications Director. The DHSS Communications Director will then submit these findings to the affected Divisions' web relations liaisons; all broken links, improper HTML or inaccessible pages must be corrected within two weeks of the date of the validation reports. If broken links, improper HTML or inaccessible pages are not corrected, the affected page(s) will be removed from the DHSS website immediately unless otherwise waived by the DHSS Communications Director. If any other standards violations are noticed, they will undergo the same enforcement process with notification to the Communications Director, web relations designees and Division Director.

III DHSS Procedures

- a) **Web Page Development Resources/Procedures:**
 - i) The Divisions may internally develop their own web content. Each Division should formulate its own internal development process.
 - ii) Anyone (employees, agencies, boards or other groups) wishing to develop web pages with information regarding DHSS programs must receive prior permission from the Division Director and/or web relations contact.
 - iii) Divisions may hire contractors to develop HTML for their web pages. However, these contractors must abide by all of the standards defined in this policy.

iv) Procedures for Requesting DMS/IRM Development Resources and Assistance

1. Divisions are encouraged to request the assistance of IRM in the development of their web pages or regarding technical questions by contacting the DHSS Helpdesk. The request must include the basic design of the page with approved content, logos, clip art and addresses of related links to other documents and other Internet sites.

b) **Procedures for Publishing Internet and Intranet Material:** Since the Internet and Intranet are used as communication tools, their contents must be approved and consistent with the beliefs of the Department, Division(s) and in accordance with DHSS Policy Memorandum #2: Communications of Department Policy. Therefore, the posting of content must undergo a consistent approval process.

i) Development and Approval Process

1. A Division's web developer works with his/her Division's program staff to create web pages. The web developer must adhere to this policy and perform any necessary tests.
2. The web developer then submits pages to his/her Division's web relations person when confident that the pages pass all items defined in this policy. With this submission, she/he must also specify a detailed description of changes made, the names of the files that are new, modified and that need to be deleted and specific instructions for where the web relations person, the Communications Director and DMS/IRM can find the new/updated files.
 - a. There are several ways to make files accessible and the method selected depends on the number of files, file sizes and convenience. The following are the options available:
 - (i) Email: If fewer than five files need to be posted to either the Intranet or Internet sites and the file sizes are relatively small (less than 100 kilobytes combined), the Division can attach the files to the email that is sent to the web relations contact (for forwarding to the Communications Director and then to the DMS/IRM HelpDesk).
 - (ii) Network Drive: If the Division intends on posting several files at a time or if it has to keep many of its pages updated regularly, the Division web developer may consider requesting space on his/her network drive to store the files. This designee will also need to request read access to the appropriate folders for the Communications Director and IRM. Please contact the Division's Information Technology designee and the DMS/IRM HelpDesk to set this up. With this method, the Division can place the files in the appropriate folder and then email the web relations contact with the specific location and names of the files to be posted.

(Again, this email will be forwarded to the Communications Director and then to the DMS/IRM HelpDesk.)

(iii) Floppy Disks/CD-ROM/Zip Drive Disks: Using floppy disks, CD-ROM or zip disks are also options for transferring very large amounts of data. However, this is not an expedient or appropriate method to use on a regular basis. In the event that an information provider wishes to use this method to transfer files for web posting, he/she should contact IRM prior to sending any such materials.

3. The web relations person checks content, spelling and assumes responsibility for the content that will be presented in his/her Division's pages.
4. If modifications are needed, the web relations person works with the Division's web developer to make the appropriate changes.
5. When the Division's web relations person approves the new or revised web content, she/he sends this content and the web developer's detailed instructions directly to the DHSS Communications Director, thereby acting as the Division's liaison with the Department. The DHSS Communications Director will then check this content for approval for the Intra- or Internet, whichever is appropriate.
6. If modification is needed, the DHSS Communications Director will work with the Division's web relations contact and the internal revision process (steps 4 -6 above) must occur again.
7. When the DHSS Communications Director approves of the web content, she/he will forward this approval and any specific instructions from the Division's web developer to the DMS/IRM HelpDesk for posting to the Intra- or Internet.
8. If any instructions are unclear, incomplete or if technical or other issues arise, the DMS/IRM web administrator will work directly with the DHSS Communications Director to resolve and/or notify her/him of such issues. If any issues are not resolvable at this level, the DHSS Communications Director will work with the Division's web relations person to resolve any issues. If this still is unclear, the Division's web relations person will work with the Division's web developer and essentially revisit the internal revision process again until the process is correct.
9. This approval process must be followed by all of DHSS. Any deviation from this process is permissible only with approval from the Communications Director.

ii) Emergency Postings

1. Expected Emergency Postings: In the event of an expected emergency posting, DMS/IRM must be notified during the normal course of a business day (i.e. between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.) via the DHSS HelpDesk that:
 - a. An emergency posting will be coming

- b. The date and time to expect to receive the posting
 - c. The method from which to expect the posting (i.e. via e-mail and to what e-mail account)
 - d. The date that it must be posted
- DMS/IRM will then make any necessary arrangements to ensure that the emergency posting will be posted within the given time frame. This practice, however, must be used only in an "Emergency" and all approvals must be received as normal.

2. Unexpected Emergency Postings: In the event of unexpected emergency postings, the Division must contact the DHSS Communications Director or her/his emergency backup, the DHSS Deputy Secretary, directly. Upon contacting this individual, the following information must be provided:

- a. The date and time DMS/IRM can expect to receive the posting
- b. The method from which to expect the posting (i.e. via e-mail and to what e-mail account)
- c. The date that it must be posted

The DHSS Communications Director (or her/his backup) will then contact the DMS/IRM staff with the above information to proceed with the emergency posting. DMS/IRM will then make any necessary arrangements to ensure that the emergency posting will be posted within the given or a reasonable time frame. This practice, however, must be used only in an "Emergency" and all approvals must be received as normal.

iii) Posting Process

1. DMS/IRM will be responsible for posting all updates to the DHSS website regardless of who actually develops the pages.
2. After receiving the web material, the DMS/IRM web administrator will post the appropriate DHSS Intranet and/or Internet pages. Generally, this will take place within three business days of receipt. In the event that the web relations designee wishes to have the files posted at a date later than three business days from receipt, he/she should include that advisory in his/her communications with the Communications Director and DMS/IRM.
3. Both the DHSS Internet and Intranet sites will be periodically reviewed and Divisions will be notified of any necessary changes as they relate to content.

c) **Ongoing Maintenance Procedures:**

- i) Division web developers should include in their notification of pending web changes the names of any files that are no longer being used so that they can be removed from the production web server. Obsolete files take up space and can slow down performance for the whole Department. Each Division should regularly review its

website for obsolete files (at least once per month but perhaps more often depending on the content of the information and its volatility). Divisions should retain their own copies of these files for future use. A backup server is also maintained with all files that have been posted into production (unless otherwise instructed).

- ii) In an effort to assist with the Department's website maintenance, Divisions are responsible for keeping IRM informed of any file name changes, deletions, etc. so that Division sites will continue to be promoted and referenced on the Department and State portal levels and in other places throughout the site. This communication must take place in the regular approval process via email sent to the Division's web relations designee and forwarded to the Communications Director and then to the DMS/IRM HelpDesk(as seen in the web posting process in section Appendix A: DHSS Web Standards and Procedures, Section III.b.i.). Please transmit any goals or ideas that Divisions may be seeking that may be of interest Department-wide (e.g. accessibility awards, etc.) via this communication method also.
- d) **Domain Name Procedures:** Requests for domain name(s) will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the DHSS Communications Director and are subject to any DTI/OIS and/or state-defined policy.